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## RENDERINGS OF SOME ODES OF HORACE

[Under ordinary circumstances the field of classical scholarship and the company of distinguished Grecians and Latinists, however tempting to an adventurous man of letters, would not have lured me from the labyrinth of anonymous early eighteenth century English literature, in which, for many years, I have pursued solitary wanderings. There was nothing ordinary, however, in the invitation that came to me to take part in a group of classical studies in memory and honor of Charles Wesley Bain. That was an invitation there could be no thought of declining, because it was a call to express, in some measure at least, under appropriate academic auspices, the admiration and affection I had felt for over thirty years for one of the dearest of all my friends. To think of the figure I might cut in the company I was asked to join, was to think of myself; to accept the invitation without hesitation was to think of my friend, was to think of rendering to his memory all the homage in my power.

The privilege to know Charlie Bain, as I always called him after our friendship began at the University of Virginia in the autumn of 1883, carried with it the privilege of knowing one of the few men I have ever encountered who was full to the brim with love of Greek poetry and equally full with knowledge of it. Generally—and the remark applies to other literatures as well—I have little difficulty in forming an opinion, erroneous or not, as to whether the balance tips toward learning or toward love; but in Bain's case I could never discern the slightest tipping. He was a most accomplished Latinist also, and, if my memory serves, it was Latin literature, and particularly Horace, that we most talked about when our friendship began, *consule Planco*. When years afterwards we were colleagues at Sewanee, I learned to know that his heart was, as mine was, with the Greek. If I could have been mean enough to envy him anything, I should have envied him his superb knowledge of the language and the literature of that most fascinating of peoples. In those days I was studying for special purposes the Greek elegists, and many were the talks we had about them. Unless he changed later, I am inclined to say that the centre of his intellectual life was Greek literature, and that the centre of that centre, if I may be allowed the expression, was Greek lyrical poetry. How deeply since his death I have regretted that then I did not know enough to talk with him about the consummate master of all lyric poets, Pindar!

Certainly, if I could shape this contribution to these studies—a too ambitious and formidable phrase—in accordance with my own wishes and with my conception of Bain's highest achievements and aspirations, I should choose a subject having some connection with things Greek. But alas! love and learning do not with me, as they did with him, go hand in hand. It is one thing to read almost daily in the Greek poets—the best thing I know, by the way, both for oneself and for one's students in any other literature—but it is quite another thing to write about them, especially when one's amateurishness has none of the grace of leisureliness. But when I reflect that I am still less of a Latinist, that even my modest studies in the mediæval Latin elegists and in Milton's Latin poetry and prose lie years behind my present occupations, I am left wondering what I am to do in order to live up to the engagements so reverently made.

There is but one way in which I can answer this question. Ever since I astonished—I think that is the right word—my teacher, Mr. Thomas H. Norwood, principal of the University School in Richmond—to whom my grateful homage with a not required version in rhyme of the *Maecenas atavis*—this to me momentous occurrence must have taken place in the autumn of 1879—I have been dabbling in the pleasant brook, or sinking deeper and deeper into the quicksands of Horatian translation. As I have said, I talked Horace with Bain in the autumn of 1883, and in that same autumn I bought a copy of Maclean's *Horace* in "Harper's Greek and Latin Texts," which I have thumbed over since, though mainly in the early odes, often in the vain endeavor to turn some stanza or entire poem into adequate English verse. At some time or other I essayed on a fly-leaf to list the "Odes in which Horace reaches a first-class level." What better evidence could one want of the youthfulness of the owner? Quite probably the matter was seriously threshed out with Charlie in his or my room on West Lawn! There is also a quotation from Shelley on another fly-leaf—"Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man." The handwriting seems to date from a later period, but whatever its date, and however youthful the practice of so adorning fly-leaves may be, the spirit of that quotation from Shelley is, if life has taught me anything, of perennial validity. I am sure that Bain would have agreed with me in this, and that he would also have been willing to apply Shelley's words to Horace, despite the people who are superfluously kind enough to assure us that the writer of the Odes was no great poet.

However all this may be, I shall never cease to be grateful to Bain for the interest he showed in some versions of selected odes which I was rash enough to publish in the *Sewanee Review* for November, 1894, along with a prose introduction on the difficulties of Horatian translation and on the methods of translators. Quite probably he helped me by his counsel—for he was then at Sewanee—when I revised this introduction and published it in my first book of essays. At any rate, we once more talked Horace at that period, and, if the fates had permitted us again to meet in the flesh, he would have displayed the same courteous interest, the same exquisite sympathy, in his attitude toward the versions I have since attempted and toward the critical remarks on my favorite poet I have since ventured to print. If I can be sure of anything, I am sure that his spirit, if it takes cognizance of small happenings in "this dim spot Which men call Earth," approves at least the form this tribute assumes, and looks with benignity upon the present renderings, which have been copied from scraps of paper, some of them beginning to grow yellow, revised in moments of leisure, written out afresh with loving care, and finally brought together as a mourning sheaf to his ever precious memory.

W. P. T.]

Three of the versions that follow are revisions; the rest have not previously been printed. The versions of 1894, as well as the prose remarks and a translation of an ode contributed to the *Bibliophile Horace*, were undertaken in the light of at least a fair acquaintance with the work of the English and American translators of Horace. My studies in this work lie now twenty years behind me, however,

and I have used in connection with the present renderings only the Latin text and two prose translations, one English, one French. Should any resemblances to the verse renderings of others be discovered, they must be regarded as fortuitous.

## I. i.

Maecenas, offspring of a regal line,  
O thou, my safe-guard, and sweet-honor mine,  
To gather dust Olympic with the car  
Some pleases, and the goal not scapèd far  
By glowing wheels, and palm, the meed of worth.  
Mounts up unto the gods, the lords of earth,  
This wight, if fickle mob of Romans vie  
With threefold honors him to lift on high;  
That yonder, if in his own barn he stores  
Whate'er is swept from Libyan threshing-floors.  
Him that delights ancestral fields to plow  
Never with Attalus' proffered wealth couldst thou  
Persuade with Cyprian keel his way to steer,  
A timid sailor, on the Myrtoan mere.  
The merchant, fearing Afric's winds at strife  
With waves Icarian, praises country life  
And city ease; but soon, untrained to bear  
Want's burdens, doth his shattered craft repair.  
Here's one that spurns not cups of Massic old,  
And from the solid day a part makes bold  
To filch, his limbs 'neath green arbutus spread,  
Or now beside a sacred water's head.  
Many the camp delights, and mixèd sound  
Of the two trumps, and wars, by mothers found  
Detestable. Bides under the frore sky  
The hunter, thoughts of tender spouse put by,  
Whether the stag by faithful dogs is seen,  
Or Marsian boar firm nets hath broken clean.  
Me ivy-meeds that learned brows enfold  
Mix with the upper gods. Me forest cold  
And dances light, of Nymphs with Satyrs, set  
Far from the people, if Euterpe yet  
Forbid not pipes, nor Polyhymnia shun

To tender me the Lesbian barbiton.  
 For, if with lyric bards thou place me now,  
 I'll strike the stars with my exalted brow.

## I. ii.

Enough now to the earth of snow and dread  
 Hail hath the Father sent, and with his red  
 Right hand the hallowed turrets bringing down,  
 Affrighted hath the town.

Frighted the nations lest the age severe  
 Of portent waiting Pyrrha reappear,  
 When Proteus led his flock entire to seek  
 The lofty mountain peak,

And in the elm-top, once a resting place  
 Well known to doves, stuck fast the finny race,  
 And in the ocean, poured out far and wide,  
 The does swam terrified.

We've seen the tawny Tiber violent,  
 With waves from shore Etruscan backward bent,  
 The monuments of the king to overthrow,  
 And Vesta's temples, flow—

What time to Ilia far too querulous  
 He boasts him champion, the uxorious  
 River at large o'er the left bank slips down,  
 Jove hiding not his frown.

They'll hear that citizens have sharpened swords  
 Wherewith had better perished Persian hordes,  
 They'll hear, our youth—sparse through parental sin—  
 Of civil strife the din.

What god now shall the people sue to bear  
 Help to the falling empire? With what prayer  
 Shall holy virgins Vesta's patience tease,  
 Whom now their songs less please?

On whom will Jupiter the mission lay  
 Of wiping out the crime? At length, we pray,  
 Come, O Apollo Augur, clad with white  
 Mist on thy shoulders bright.

Or else thou, Erycina, smiling bland,  
Round whom fly Jests and Loves, a frolic band,  
Or, Founder, on neglected sons and race,  
Turning a gracious face,—

Whom satiate, alas! with sport drawn out,  
Smooth helmets gratify, and battle shout,  
And savage face that Moor unhorsed doth show  
His ruthless, bloodstained foe.

Or thou, a comely youth presenting here  
On earth, thy figure changed, winged son of dear  
Maia, not loth to be of Cæsar's fate  
Called the avenger great.

Slow mayst thou into heaven return, and long  
Glad mayst thou mingle with the Roman throng,  
Nor thee, disgusted with our vices, may  
Too sudden gale away

Transport. Here triumphs great be thy desire  
Rather, and to be hailed our prince and sire,  
Nor unchastisèd Medes to prance allow,  
Cæsar, our leader thou!

I. iii.

So may the Cyprian goddess-queen,  
So Helen's brothers, stars of lucid sheen,  
Keep thee, and so the sire of winds,  
If all beside Iäpyx fair he binds,—  
Ship, that to Attic shores dost owe  
The Vergil we in trust on thee bestow;  
Return him, all unspent and whole,  
And save, I pray, the half of my own soul.  
He oak and triple brass did graft  
Upon his bosom who a fragile raft  
Committed to the savage deep  
First, nor felt fear of Afric's headlong sweep  
Against Aquilo, nor of sad  
Hyades nor of Notus raging mad,—  
Than whom no greater master knows  
The Hadrian waves to ruffle or compose.

What step of death had he in awe  
 Who with dry eyes the swimming monsters saw,  
 And viewed the turgid sea, and high  
 Acroceraunian cliffs of infamy?  
 The prudent deity in vain  
 Cut off the lands from the unsocial main,  
 If impious ships yet far and wide  
 May over gulfs forfended safely glide.  
 O'erbold all things to undertake  
 The race of man through crime forbid doth break;  
 O'erbold the race Iäpetan  
 By evil fraud brought fire from heaven to man.  
 When from its aëry home the flame  
 Was filched, a brooding troop of fevers came,  
 And wasting sickness, on the land;  
 And slow necessity put forth a hand  
 To speed Death's step, before removed.  
 The empty aether Daedalus once proved  
 With wings that never man might don.  
 Herculean labor broke through Acheron.  
 We mortals are for naught too weak;  
 Heaven's very self in folly do we seek,  
 Nor suffer, through our crime and pride,  
 High Jove his angry bolts to put aside.

I. vi.

Thou shalt be sung by Varius, bird of song  
 Homeric, victor over foes and strong,  
 Whate'er with ship or horse our soldiery  
 Fierce hath accomplished under thee.

Those feats to sing, Agrippa, or the hot  
 Rage of the son of Peleus, knowing not  
 To yield, or sly Ulysses' course pursued  
 By sea, or Pelops' household rude

We try not, weak for themes so grand, while shame,  
 And Muse that to the peaceful lyre lays claim,  
 Forbid egregious Cæsar's meeds to stain,  
 And thine, through fault of this poor brain.

Who Mars in adamantine vest could limn  
In fashion fit, or Meriones grim  
With dust of Troy, or to the gods of light  
Tydides peer, through Pallas' might?

But we of feasts, of fights that virgins wage,  
With parèd nails, 'gainst youths in mimic rage,  
Sing fancy-free, or, if at all we flame,  
Our lightsome mood is still the same.

## I. xi.

Thou must not ask—to know were evil—what end to me, to thee,  
The gods, Leuconœ, have given, nor shouldst thou trial make  
Of Babylonian numbers. Better to bide whate'er shall be,  
Whether more winters Jove hath lotted, or this, which now doth break  
The Tuscan sea on rocks opposing, shall give us as our last.  
Be prudent, set thy wines to filter, and be thy long hope brought  
Within thy life's exiguous measure. For, while we speak, flies past  
Begrudging time; today ingather, tomorrow trusting naught.

## I. xxiv.

What bounds to longing for a head so dear,  
What shame should be? Oh, teach me measures grave,  
Melpomene, to whom a liquid clear  
Voice the Father with the cither gave.

Lo! a perpetual lethargy doth hold  
Quintilius! And when shall Modesty,  
And Justice's sister Faith, not bought and sold,  
And naked truth his equal ever see?

By many good men wept, he is brought low,  
By none more wept, O Vergil, than by thee,  
Who of the gods him—ah, not granted so—  
Vainly dost ask, despite thy piety.

What though the string erst by the trees obeyed  
Thou strike, than Thracian Orpheus more bland,  
The blood will not reënter the frail shade,  
When once, with contact of his dreadful wand,



Mercury, not prompt to change for prayer  
 The Fates, has forced it into his black throng.  
 Harsh lot! But patience makes less hard to bear  
 That which to alter would be counted wrong.

## I. xxx.

O Venus, Gnidian, Paphian Queen,  
 Loved Cyprus spurn, and to the halls  
 Where with much incense Glycera calls  
 Betake thyself to dwell.

And with thee let the fervid Boy,  
 Graces loose-zoned, and Nymphs repair,  
 And youth, without thee far from fair,  
 And Mercury as well.

## II. vi.

Septimius, ready my way to share  
 To Gades and the Cantabrian, taught to bear  
 Not yet our yoke, and to the Syrtes where  
 The moorish billow boils,—

May Tibur, by the Argive founded, be  
 In my old age the resting place for me,  
 The goal for one that wearies of the sea,  
 Travel, and martial toils!

Whence, if the grudging Parcae me expel,  
 I'll seek Galaesus, stream sweet to the fell  
 Of sheep, and regions where in state did dwell  
 Phalanthus, Spartan-bred.

For me that nook, of all, doth smile most fair,  
 Whose honey with Hymettus' may compare,  
 Whose olive with green Venafrum's well may bear  
 The contest without dread;

Where Jupiter a lingering spring doth send  
 And winters mild, and Aulon's valley, friend  
 To fertile Bacchus, little grudge doth spend  
 On the Falernian vine.

That region and those happy heights now sue  
For thee and me; there, with the teardrops due,  
Scattering his still warm ashes thou shalt rue  
    This poet-friend of thine.

## II. ix.

Not always from the clouds do rains descend  
On the rough fields; nor is the Caspian Mere  
By shifting tempests vexed, O Valgius friend,  
    Forever; nor amid the drear

Armenian wilds doth ice the months throughout  
Inert abide; nor with Aquilo's blare  
For aye do oaks Garganan labor stout,  
    Nor ash-trees of their leaves stand bare.

Thou alway in thy tearful strains dost cry  
For Mystes taken hence; nor yet from thee  
Departs thy love when Vesper mounteth high,  
    Or from the rapid sun doth flee.

But not for his beloved Antilochus  
Mourned the thrice-agèd sire through all the years;  
Nor parents for the beardless Troilus,  
    Nor Phrygian sisters, went in tears

Unceasing. Then do thou remit at length  
Thy soft complaints, and let us rather sound  
Praise of the trophies of Augustus' strength,  
    Yea, and Niphates' peak snow-crowned,

And the Medes' river, that, to realms subdued  
Added, rolls onward its diminished tide,  
And in their narrow fields, prescribed, the rude  
    Gelonian horsemen doomed to ride.

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